

Message Text

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PAGE 01 QUITO 01408 030143Z
ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00
SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 DHA-02 EB-08 AID-05 TRSE-00
SY-05 CPR-01 /071 W
-----030206 123330 /72-61

O R 030125Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY QUITO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 3382
INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
AMEMBASSY LIMA
LVUESGY/AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL 407
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
USCINCSO CZ

C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 1408

FOR DELIVERY OPENING OF BUSINESS MARCH 3

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR MILI MASS EC PE
SUBJ: PROPOSED HIGH-LEVEL ECUADOREAN MISSION TO WASHINGTON

REF: STATE 045987

1. SUMMARY: THE GOE HAS NOW DECIDED THAT BEFORE SENDING THE HIGH-LEVEL MISSION WHICH IT HAD PREVIOUSLY REQUESTED, IT WISHES TO SEND A MISSION AT THE UNDERSECRETARY LEVEL TO TEST THE WATER IN WASHINGTON. THE GOE REQUESTS THAT THE MISSION BE RECEIVED SOMETIME BETWEEN MARCH 20 AND THE END OF THE MONTH.

2. I WAS CALLED IN BY THE UNDERSECRETARY OF FOREIGN RELATIONS, JOSE AYALA, ON THE AFTERNOON OF MARCH 2. HE TOLD ME THAT AFTER DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN THE FOREIGN MINISTRY AND THE
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 QUITO 01408 030143Z

PRESIDENT, IT HAD BEEN DETERMINED TO POSTPONE THE MINISTERIAL-LEVEL MISSION TO WASHINGTON. AYALA SAID THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD DECIDED (OBVIOUSLY ON THE ADVICE OF THE FOREIGN MINISTRY) THAT TO HAVE A HIGH-LEVEL MISSION TO TO WASHINGTON AT THIS TIME BORE WITH IT CERTAIN POLITICAL RISKS WITHIN ECUADOR. THE QUESTION WOULD BE RAISED AS TO WHY THE MISSION HAD GONE AND WHAT RESULTS IT HAD ACHIEVED.

IF THE MISSION WERE UNABLE TO POINT TO CONCRETE RESULTS A FEELING OF DISILLUSIONMENT WOULD BE CREATED AMONG THE ECUADOREAN PUBLIC. THE GOE HAD THEREFORE DECIDED THAT IT WOULD LIKE TO SEND A PRELIMINARY MISSION COMPOSED OF AYALA AND A HIGH-RANKING MILITARY OFFICER FOR SEVERAL DAYS BETWEEN MARCH 20 AND MARCH 31.

3. THIS MISSION WOULD HOLD WIDE-RANGING DISCUSSIONS WITH USG OFFICIALS AT THE SUB-CABINET LEVEL. SUCH CONVERSATIONS WOULD COVER BILATERAL MATTERS INCLUDING MILITARY RELATIONSHIPS, LOS, AND FINANCIAL AND ECONOMIC QUESTIONS; MULTILATERAL AFFAIRS, PARTICULARLY U.S.-LATIN AMERICAN RELATIONS, THE FUTURE OF U.S. POLICY TOWARDS REGIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND HUMAN RIGHTS; AND ALSO THE SUB-REGIONAL SITUATION I.E. PERU-CHILE-ECUADOR-BOLIVIA. AYALA POINTED OUT THAT A MISSION AT THE SUB-CABINET LEVEL WOULD NOT CREATE THE SAME INTERNAL PUBLIC RELATIONS PROBLEMS AS A MINISTERIAL MISSION WOULD. IF THE MARCH MISSION FOUND A RECEPTIVE CLIMATE IN WASHINGTON, AND IF IT LOOKED AS IF A HIGHER-LEVEL MISSION AT A LATER DATE WOULD PROVE BENEFICIAL FOR BOTH COUNTRIES, THEN A DECISION COULD BE MADE AT SOME POINT DOWN THE ROAD FOR A MINISTERIAL GROUP TO GO TO WASHINGTON.

4. COMMENT: OBVIOUSLY, WHAT HAS HAPPENED HERE IS THAT THE MILITARY'S SPONTANEOUS DECISION TO SEND A HIGH-LEVEL MISSION ON AN URGENT BASIS TO WASHINGTON HAS BEEN SHOT DOWN BY THE FOREIGN MINISTRY, WHICH HAS BEEN ABLE TO PERSUADE THE SUPREME COUNCIL THAT A MISSION WITHOUT "CONCRETE RESULTS" WOULD HAVE AN UNFAVORABLE POLITICAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 QUITO 01408 030143Z

IMPACT DOMESTICALLY. WHILE THERE IS SOMETHING TO THE FOREIGN MINISTRY'S CONCERN ABOUT THE DOMESTIC IMPACT, I BELIEVE THAT THAT PROBLEM COULD HAVE BEEN DEALT WITH BY SOME SKILLFUL HANDLING OF THE PRESS. BUT THE FOREIGN MINISTRY, WITH ITS EXCESSIVE CONCERN FOR "FACE", HAS ONCE AGAIN PREVAILED.

5. RECOMMENDATION: THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE AND DEFENSE AGREE TO THE AYALA MISSION IN LATE MARCH, PROVIDED THAT IT CAN BE RECEIVED AT A LEVEL COMMENSURATE WITH ITS RANK. WHILE I REALIZE THAT THE DEPARTMENT MAY BE A BIT PUT OFF BY THE ON-AGAIN-OFF-AGAIN APPROACH BY THE GOE IN THIS MATTER, I BELIEVE THAT A CONTINUING DEMONSTRATION OF OUR RECEPTIVITY TO LISTEN TO THE ECUADOREAN'S CONCERNS IS IMPORTANT AT THIS JUNCTURE, IN THE WAKE OF THE KFIR DECISION. MOREOVER, AYALA IS THE HIGHEST RANKING CAREER OFFICER IN THE FOREIGN MINISTRY AND AN EXTREMELY ABLE DIPLOMAT WITH A SOLID BACKGROUND IN BOTH BILATERAL AND MULTILATERAL AFFAIRS. AT THIS MOMENT WHEN WASHINGTON IS STUDYING VARIOUS POLICY ALTERNATIVES

REGARDING RELATIONS WITH THE REGION, AYALA IS WORTH LISTENING TO. HE IS VERY REPRESENTATIVE OF WHAT I WOULD CALL THE "LEADING EDGE" OF LATIN AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY SHAPERS PARTICULARLY WITH REGARD TO THE FUTURE OF THE INTER-AMERICAN SYSTEM. IN ADDITION HE IS, OF COURSE, AS OUR EXPERIENCE WITH THE HIGH-LEVEL MISSION DEMONSTRATES, VERY IMPORTANT IN THE USG-GOE RELATIONSHIP. FINALLY, HIS INTEREST IN DISCUSSING THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN LATIN AMERICA COULD OFFER AN OPPORTUNITY TO INFLUENCE THE POSITION OF ECUADOR ON THIS PROBLEM IN FUTURE DISCUSSIONS OF IT IN THE INTER-AMERICAN FORA. ECUADOR'S SYMPATHIES ARE WITH US ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE BUT IT IS ALSO CONCERNED WITH "U.S. INTER UNIONSIM".

6. I WOULD APPRECIATE A PROMPT RESPONSE TO THE GOE'S REQUEST.
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